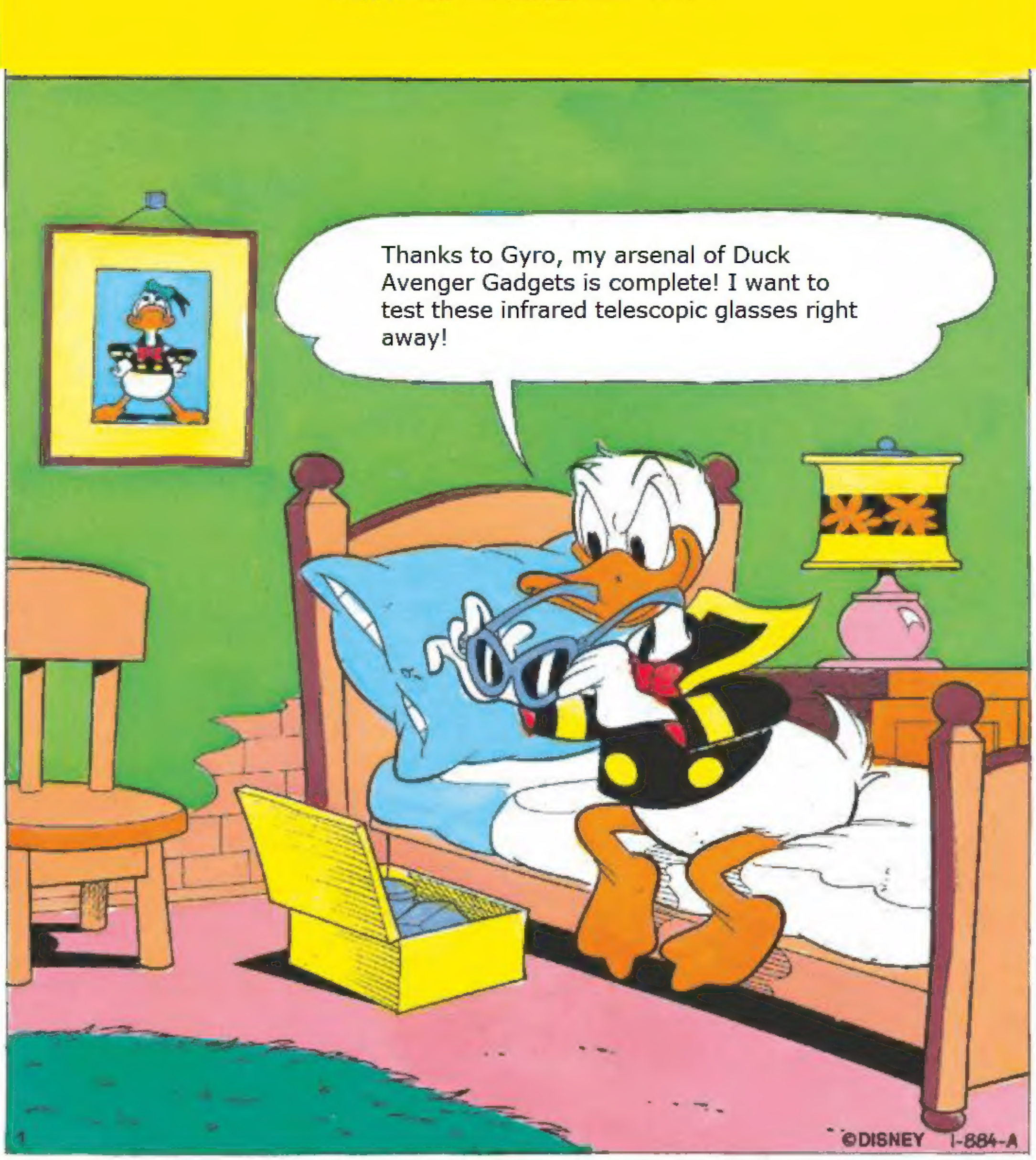
THE DUCK AVENGER

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

STORY: GUIDO MARTINA
ART: MASSIMO DE VITA


Thanks to Gyro, my arsenal of Duck Avenger Gadgets is complete! I want to test these infrared telescopic glasses right away!
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I'll try them out with the weather vane on that house a few miles away.

Wow! It's almost like I could touch it!

Now to try these long-range radio-amplifying earbuds!

I'll listen to the chit-chat of people walking along the street...

Huh? Rockerduck is here? He's talking to the kids!

Hello, Mr. Rockerduck! What are you doing today?

Oh, just contemplating my new house, boys!

But... this house belongs to our Unca Donald!

Ha! Ha! Not for long!

Not for long?

At the end of the month, I'll own this property, and then...

Grumph!

Unca Donald! Mr. Rockerduck said that...

I heard what he said! I'm not deaf!

What's all this hot air? *You*, owning *my* house?

Tut, tut! Let's try to be a little more accurate!

First of all, this house isn't *yours*. It belongs to *my dear* enemy, *your dear* uncle, Scrooge McDuck!

So?

Secondly, you never pay your rent, so you are in *debt!*

Pah! That's none of your business!

Tut, tut! You're wrong, young man! It *is* my business!

Your "dear" uncle has decided he's done dealing with his *leech* of a nephew, so he's handing the house over to me.

Then... I'll be *your* tenet?

This isn't looking so hot!

Ha, ha, ha! You, my tenet? What a good joke! Me, your landlord? *Ho, ho, ho!* Too funny!

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Fine! So what?

Oof!

BONK

So, you'll leave and I'll get to flatten this dump!

Grrr! You'll do no such thing!

Yikes!

I'm going to knock down your house! Bet on it!

Hrumph! I won't let you!

Hee, hee! If you manage that, I'll eat my hat!

OH, we'll see about *that!*

Yes, you *will* see—see a dozen bulldozers digging a pool where your pathetic excuse for a house currently stands.

Gulp!

Oh, no!

That kind of activity would reveal the Duck Avenger's underground hideout!

What a disaster! That *cannot* happen! No one can know that I am him!

Nothing else to say, child? Really took your breath away, huh?

Oh, no! We can't watch!

You'll be the one *without breath* when I'm through--

Down, boy!

Ow!

SBONK

Grr! So *that's* how you want to play?

Hee, hee, hee! Yessiree! At the end of the month, your house'll be mine!

In that case... *grr*... here's the *down payment!*

Ouch!

BONK

Grr! Tossing stones! What a pinhead! Humph!

What are you gonna do, Unca Donald?

I'm gonna fix this!

Uncle Scrooge owes me an explanation!

ZOUUMM

ZOUM

...and it better be *good!*

ZOUUMM

At last, this spot won't be empty any more!

TOC TOC TOC

What miserable plot are you up to, uncle Scrooge?

Well at the moment I'm admiring my fine assemblage of Masters, Donald! What do you think?

ZOUM

There's still one missing, but...

Drop the art talk! What about Rockerduck? What are you two crooked canards conniving?

Ah, you're speaking of my dear enemy, John D. Rockerduck!

Precisely! Is it true you intend to hand him my house?

You mean *my* house? The one you haven't payed rent on in *years*?

Skip that! What kind of diabolical plot are you planting?

Planting? You mean *painting!* He has a masterwork that I've wanted for years! Today, we've come to an agreement for an exchange!

So, he dons you this doodle, and in exchange, you're giving him *my home?*

Bravo, dear nephew! I didn't think you were so clever!

One moment, McDuck! There's one matter to work out.

10

Ah, and here he is! What sweet breeze blew you by here?

Leaving the pharmacy, I realized I must tell you immediately...

To bring your *violent* young nephew to his senses!

Tut, tut, Johnny! I acted in legitimate defense of my home!

Nephew, not even your right to life is legitimate!

Gulp!

So you had best disappear while Rockerduck and I conclude our business!

VLAN

I want to hear what they're...

Ah-ha! Just what I thought! Thought it was wise to stay and spy a little, huh?

Hey!

Disappear, I said! Out of earshot!

SBONK

Ow!

BROLOOOHUM

Oof!

Ow!

Oof!

SVISSSHHH

Donald! If you can hear my voice, you can hear your doom!

He's gone! We can speak freely of business!

Hee, hee!

Luckily, Uncle Scrooge doesn't know I have these incredible earbuds of Gyro's!

I can hear them very well! Now, he's promising Rockerduck...

Yelp! To disinherit me if I dare defend my house!

It's a very effective threat!

In that case, I can rest easy!

Well? Still willing to make the exchange?

Of course!

You give me the house...

... and you give me *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Huh? *The Sleeping Beauty*?

Finally, I'll complete my prestigious collection!

And finally, the pool of my dreams will become a reality!

Oh! Of course... the name of the painting....

Grr! I'll keep Uncle Scrooge from throwing my house away for nothing but a boring old painting!

But how? Hmm... I better listen for the terms of the deal!

Now that we're in agreement, go fetch the painting!

Not so fast! I'm a bit out of sorts from your nephew, and need some rest...

I'll bring it a little later! Maybe even tonight!

I understand. In the meantime, I'll prepare the contract for the transfer of the house.

I heard everything! Now to work!

First, I have to send nephews off! I can't work in the middle of the day without making them suspicious!

Unca Donald! How was it?

Bad. Pff! Worse than bad, even! We have to leave *today*!

But where will we live?

You're going to Grandma's. There at least you'll have a bed and a roof and a parent!

For now, I have to find a new house!

Go on-- get ready to go!

Bye-bye, Unca Donald! And good luck!

Don't worry, kids! Things'll turn around!

For my plan, I'll need a few gadgets from my hideout!

For starters, my bottle of somni-spray, the sleeping gas!

Then, in the chest...

Hmm... Uncle Scrooge... Daisy... Gladstone...

Ah-ha! The infamous Rockerduck!

For now, that's all I'll need!

You and me one-on-one, Johnny! You said you needed rest?

My somni-spray will make sure you'll receive all the *rest*, *relaxation*, and *repose* you'll ever need!

Here's his mansion!

DRIIINNG

ROCKERDUCK

Doesn't he hear the bell? What if he's not around?

DRINNNGG
DRIIINGGG
DRINNGG

R CKERD

Grumph! I'm sleeping! Who's there? What do you want?

Finally!

Telegram for Mr. Rockerduck!

18

Here!

Hey. That's...

Ourgf! Cough! Cough! Argh!

SVISSSH

Back to sleep, sir!

ZZZ

Where could this painting be? It's not in this room!

Hmm... seeing as the painting is of a *Sleeping Beauty*, maybe it's in the bedroom!

I'm right!

There it is, just waiting to be taken!
But first... hee, hee...

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

... It's time to play a little dress-up!

Bye-bye, Sailor Suit!

A few moments later...

Just one last thing...

Hello! Glad to see you're as ugly as ever, Mr. Rockerduck!

20

Now for the painting...

... grab my clothes...

... and wish that *other* Sleeping Beauty sweet dreams!

zzz zzz zzz

ROCKERDUCK

Hmm.. I can't go back to Uncle Scrooge right away! Rockerduck just told him he needed rest!

I need to wait at least an hour so the old snake doesn't get suspicious!

So, an hour later...

Hi there, Johnny! Already feeling better?
I've got a head of steel, Scroogey, and besides, the quicker we conclude our business, the better I'll feel!

You'll take the painting with one hand, and give me the contract with the other!
Hee-hee! That's only fair, Rockerduck! It's better not to trust each other completely!

Here's your contract!

And here's your painting!

Hmm...

Hmm...

What are you...?

Don't be daft, Rockerduck! I'm making sure the paint isn't *too recent* for a painting nearly *three hundred years old*!

But what about you?

hmmnnyh! There better not be any clauses on a microscopic level!

Tee hee! With us, you can never be too careful!

Ha ha! Better to be careful than be tricked!

Now that I have the contract in hand, I can get a good night's rest!

Sweet dreams, *dearest personal enemy*!

23

I've wanted this painting for so long! And finally, here it is! I need to tell my dear nephew!

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

He really made it possible! I should offer him a couple hundred dollars in gratitude!

Yessir, he deserves it! It sure was thoughtful of Gladstone to suggest the exchange!

Meanwhile...

Back to the chest, Johnny! You've done your job! Now, I have the contract!

And here's what I'll do with this miserable scrap of paper! Ten, a hundred, *a thousand* pieces...

CRAC CRAC

...tossed into the wind to be carried! Some to the Arctic, some to Timbuktu!

Without the contract, Rockerduck can't claim ownership of my house!

And uncle Scrooge surely won't sign another, now that he has the painting!

Wherefore, I am the most happy of ducks... zzz...

I'm the happiest duck in the world!

I'm doubly happy, Uncle Scrooge!

Primero, You have the painting. *Segundo*, my good-for-nothing cousin will be thrown out...

25

AH-HAAA! GRRR!

Wak! Where's that roaring come from?

Rockerduck!

There it is! That confirms my suspicions!

Confirmation? Suspicions?

?

Old snake! Incurable thief! Duplicitous monster!

Johnny? Have you lost your mind?

You sent one of your miserable underlings, *him* perhaps, to steal the painting!

He's gone mad!

Steal the painting?

Uncle Scrooge, you told me he brought you the painting about an hour ago?

That's precisely what happened! And I gave him the contract!

Grrr! Lies and treachery! I did *not* come and I did *not* get any contract!

26

Rockerduck! Are you calling me dishonest!?

Yes! That is exactly what I'm doing!

Calm down! Let's think through this!

You say that an hour ago, Mr. Rockerduck...

Grr! An hour ago, I was a sleep! Someone rang, and I came to open the door...

And they knocked me out and snatched the painting and my clothes!

What are you looking at, uncle Scrooge?

Hm.. the bandage on Rockerduck's head. An hour ago, he didn't have it any more... and now he's put it back on.

I never took it off! It hurts too much...

His voice was also different...

Uncle Scrooge! You mean someone...

Yes! Someone who wanted the contract dressed up as Rockerduck and...

Hey! Only Donald would be interested in that contract!

Then it was *him*!

Come on, Scroogey, let's go settle this!

Grumph!

Grr!

Hee, hee!

Meanwhile, Donald sleeps...

zzz

28

... unaware of the terrible storm that is approaching! His awakening will be hard, and he'll have to call on all of his talent and skill to come out the victor in this game of gazillionaires, art, and sleep!

Huh? What's going on? Is this the Three Musketeers?

Musketeers hungry for revenge!

Here for our Rochefort!

Never heard of it! But there's *cheddar* in the fridge if you want. I'm going back to sleep!

Hrumph!

Get up! No sleeping while I'm speaking!

Gggh!

BONK

Now go get it out!

Get out?

Not *you* get out! Get *it* out! The contract! Bring it here!

Contract?

Argh! Stop playing innocent, and go fetch it!

Drop the gibberish!

Stubborn, isn't he?

Allow me!

I could send you to prison! You drugged me, stole...

Forget it! I know nothing of any Sleeping Beauty!

Huh?

Ah! You just gave yourself away, 'cuz!

Whoops! I spoke too fast!

How did you know the name of the painting? We never told you which one!

Wh-what name? Wh-wh-what p-painting?

This one!

Like you said, *The Sleeping Beauty!*

Pah! I don't recognize it!

Hm... really?

Then...

I imagine you don't recognize *this*, either?

Kjsglnprfd!

Here's the proof!

My nephew! You've been caught!

I'm ashamed of you, kid!

Nosey spy, that dirty cousin!

31

Give me the contract!

Impossible! I ripped it into a thousand pieces!

Oh, so it's like that, huh? Well, I'll just have to rip your name from my will!

Give me the painting, Rockerduck! I'll prepare a new contract immediately!

Hee, hee! This simple mask lost you your inheritance!

Grrr!

Not to mention, you'll be evicted from...

Grrr...

I'll rip *your name* from the ranks of the living!

Don't make threats you can't carry out!

You don't think I'm capable? Then take *this*!

Ooof!

BOMPF

Let me return the favor!

Urgf!

BING

Ready for the second round?

More than ready!

GRRR

COUAC

OURGF

BOMPF

OURGH

You're going *down!*

Oo-ooof!

Gulp!

Donald! Stop that!

33

Grr!

I said *stop*!

CRAAASHH

Ow!

Uncle Scrooge! What did you do?

Fkjasdkljfs!

My stars! The painting!

Tsk, tsk, tsk!

It's your fault, Donald! How many centuries of free work will it take for you to pay it off!?

Me, pay? Alright!

34

Here's the down payment! You can hang your *own pretty face* on the wall now!

Nephew, I would like to hang *you* just about now.

TONG

Scrooge! Instead of making threats you're *too soft* to carry out, let's talk business!

Hm.. This isn't good!

Business!

Ha! Ha! Very funny, Johnny!

Scrooge'll give you a house in exchange for a ruined painting? I'd like to see that!

Don't listen to him, Scrooge! We'll still trade!

Uh... how? The painting is... uh... not exactly...

You're talking about *that* painting? I'm talking about the authentic one!

You mean...

35

I mean that the *real* painting is in my safe!

That one is a copy I hung on my wall as a decoration!

Amazing!

So, I'll give you the authentic *Sleeping Beauty*, and you will sign a new contract!

It's a deal!

Ha, ha, haaaa! You really made out this time, cousin!

Sniff!

All of your efforts for nothing! Less than nothing!

Sniff!

I need to seem resigned to fate so they don't become suspicious!

Alright, then! Go fetch the painting!

Of course, but... it's rather far away!

You listening, Duck Avenger?

I keep it in my vacation home. It's two hours away!

Let's go!

No, you'll stay here!

You'll do me a small favor... *psst pssst psst*...

Alright?

Perfect!

So, where is it?

In the town of Lonely Pines, 40 miles east on the 13. If you want, we can go there, but.. uh..

Zzz zzz

How can we be sure the little brat won't interfere?

No worries! I've taken precautions!

He is definitively neutralized!

Hee, hee, hee!

Neutralized, huh? We'll see about that!

VLAN

A few minutes, then... we'll see!

Soon...

Now, they're far enough away, so with feline agility and silence, I can...

Surprise!

Gladstone! What are you doing here?

Orders from uncle Scrooge! I will be on guard all night to keep you from leaving! A strong pot of coffee'll keep me awake!

I hope you choke on it!

May I offer you a cup?

Insolent pest!

It'll help you digest your defeat!

Drink it yourself!

39

Here!

Argh!

SPLATCH

Psfwlkdlf!

I wouldn't try and go out the window if I were you, 'cuz! There are fifty pounds worth of shattered glass spread across the ground! Uncle Scrooge's orders!

Bah!

Sweet dreams, Donnie!

Get outta here!

Hee, hee, hee!

So, uncle Scrooge really thought of everything, huh?

CROUIC

CROUIC

CROUIC

CROUIC

Hm...yes. There's glass everywhere. Exiting this way would be a mite unhealthy!

But! He remains blissfully unaware of my many secrets!

For example, my snoring head!

CLIC

Now when my dear cousin comes knocking, he'll see me sleeping!

zzz zz

Now, I only have to use my wardrobe-elevator...

...descend a few floors...

And here I am in my hideout, ready to become the Duck Avenger!

Hee, hee! He's resigned to his fate! Sleeping like a baby, even snoring!

Ah, if only Gladstone knew!

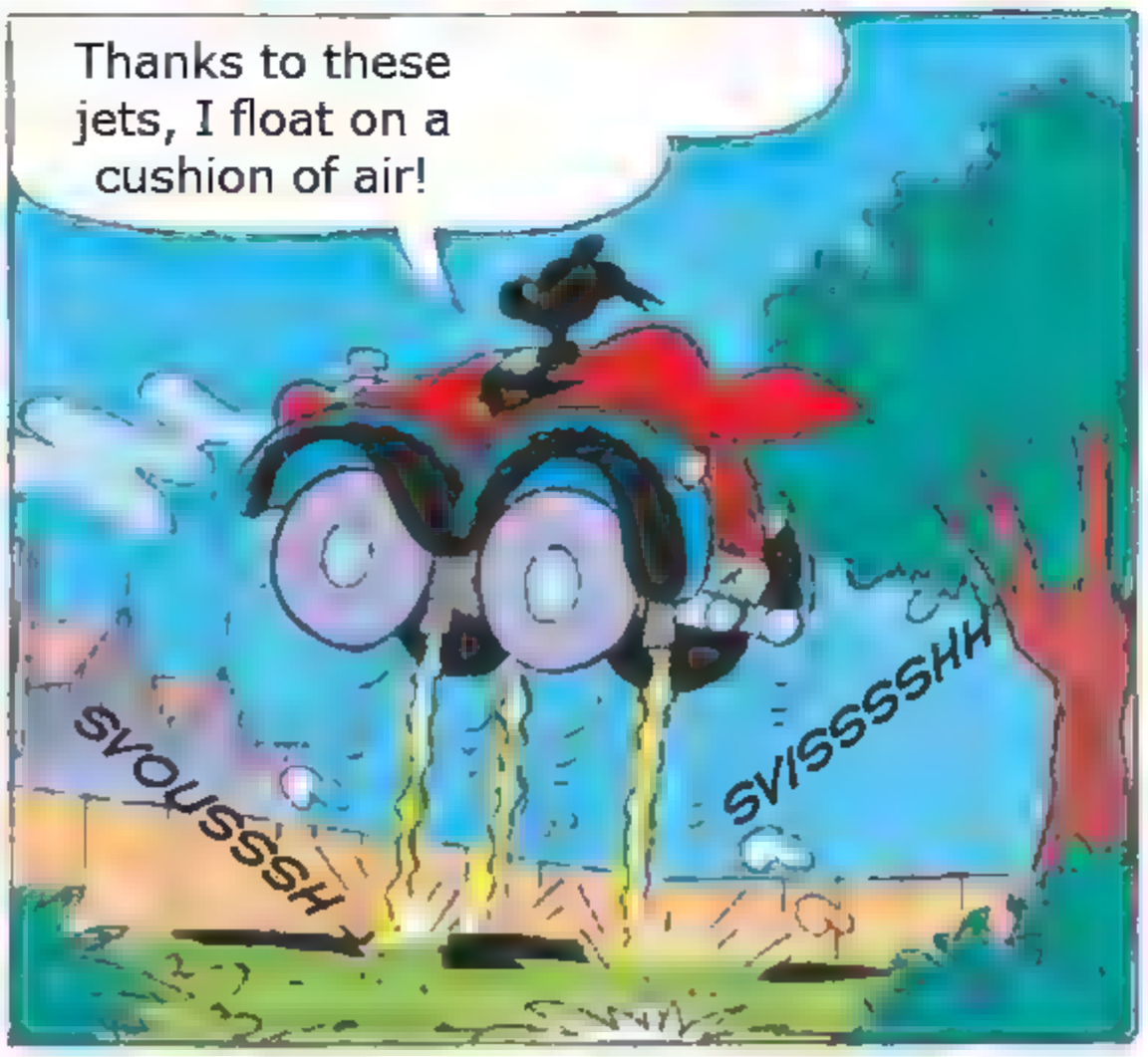
The Duck Avenger is ready!

These infrared telescopic glasses will let me see in the dark!

42

To work!

He leaves via the toolshed, avoiding the house...



SVISSSHHH
SVOSSSH

Let's see... 40 Miles... Lonely Pines...

CALISOTA
13
EAST

Aha! There they are, the crooks! I see the two bandits as clear as day!

They're talking! What could they be saying?

I'll soon know! I sure am getting a lot of millage out of these earpbuds!

Yes! It's very isolated!

Hm! They're talking about Rockerduck's vacation home!

Get off on exit 15 for Lonely Pines, and there'll be a sign..

Hmm...

All the same, I don't like the idea of leaving the painting at an unguarded house!

Unguarded? Ha! The place very well guarded by Blade and Fang!

"Blade and Fang"? ¿Qué es?

Huh?

Yes! Blade is the type to shoot on sight, and Fang is no softie himself!

Two guards, then! And tough ones, it sounds like!

But they're no match for the Duck Avenger!

For now, I have to beat uncle Scrooge and his good friend Johnny to the vacation home!

SVOUSSSHHH SVOUUSSSHHH

ZOUUMM

Ugh! I hate it when people speed!

Whelp! W-what...

Ha, ha, ha!

ZOUHUM

VRRROUHUM

SVOUUSHH

A little gift for the two robbers! Ha, ha, ha!

SVISSSHHHH

ZOUUMM

The fog's rising!

Fog? This is smog!

Cough! Cough! We should install filters on our factories!

Cough! Sure, but you *know* how much that costs!

Exiting at Lonely Pines, the Duck Avenger finds the driveway to Rockerduck's vacation home...

ROCKERDUCK PALACE
PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING!

ZOUUUM

The Duck Avenger can *trespass* wherever and whenever he pleases!

ZOUHUM

I'll pull up behind the wall, in the bushes.

ROCKERDUCK

Now to enter my way!

First, I'll ring the bell!

DING DING DONG DING DONG DONG

Then, a little hop...

PLOMP

Gulp! There's Blade... and that must be Fang!

Who's there?

Woof! Growl!

48

Down, boy! It must be the boss! He called and said he'd come by tonight!

Sniff!

Good evening, Mr. Rocker...

Where is he?

Mr. Rockerduck? Are you there?

Sniff!

Hee, hee! Now that he's *outside*, I'm only a hop, skip, and a jump away from...

the inside!

PLOMP

PLOMP

49

I don't have much time, but I need to find the safe!

This house is so big, I'll have to rely on luck to find it in time!

Humph! It must have been some inept prank!
Growl!

But, if the prankster returns! Ha, ha! I'll riddle them with *lead!*
Growl!

Meanwhile...

Ah-ha! The safe, my dearest!
50

But as big as it is, it stands no chance against my power of my laser-gun!

Hee, hee!

The real *Sleeping Beauty*!

LA BELLE END MIE

An old newspaper? It must be important if Johnny put it in the safe!

Oh, my! Good to know!

51

Time to go home!

Hmm.. Where are Blade and Fang hiding..?

No matter... I'll just sneak along the edge...

...to the back of the house...

... and in two skips...

PLOMP

PLOMP

52

PLOMP

I need to watch where I'm going! I don't want to pass Uncle Scrooge and Rockerduck!

ZOUUHUM

A little later...

Here we are! I've already told Blade I'd be coming!

I'm excited to see the painting!

DING DING

Ha, ha, ha! Here they are again! Let's see how they like this!

DING DING DONG DONG

Growl!

Take this, you rascal!

Grooowwwl!

BANG BANG

My word! What a welcome!

I don't understand!

BANG BANG BANG BANG

Forget understanding, let's try running!

Grr! That numbskull! I'll have him fired!

Where are they hiding?

Woof! Woof! Woof!

Come out from there!

Sniff!

Yelp! Mr. Rockerduck!

Grr! I hope there's an explanation!

SLURP!

Uh... I thought... you were someone else!

There's no one else for miles around!

Not long ago, someone rang the bell but there wasn't anyone there!

I see? So then?

Well, I searched the area and...

You left the house *unguarded?*

I have a horrible hunch...

ZOUHUM

A catastrophe!

What is it?

The safe is broken into! The painting is... stolen!

Donald must be the thief! I'll eat my hat if it wasn't him!

I agree!

ZOUUMM

55

Later...

Where is he? Where is my unmentionably abhorrent nephew?
Why did you let him leave?
Let who leave? Donald?

Who else?
He hasn't left his room! He's been sleeping and snoring like a steam engine!

See for yourself!
I will!

As I see and hear!
56

Hrumph! I'll bring this to light!
Stop, old rogue!

Step away from that door!

Gulp! The Duck Avenger!

He has the painting!

The Sleeping Beauty!

Give it to me!

To me!

Get your paws away! It's going back to it's rightful owner!

Stay back!

Yes, sir! *Gulp!*

Now, a lightning transformation back into Donald!

VLAN

57

A few moments later...

Uncle Scrooge! Mr. Rockerduck! What are you doing at my place?

Where is the Duck Avenger? We saw him go in your room!

You think that's strange? Don't you know the Duck Avenger is a good friend of mine?

Before he jumped out the window, he said you should never attempt to throw me out of my house again!

Alright! If those are his orders...

Then, he told me to return this painting to it's rightful owner!

Me!

Me!

Hmm... I'm starting to worry...

No! The rightful owner is the Baltimore Museum of Art!

Oops!

The Baltimore Mus...

Yes! The painting was stolen about three years ago! Here's the article in the newspaper!

BALTIMO

Rockerduck! You knew?

Of course he did! The Duck Avenger found the paper in the safe with the painting!

Uh... Mm...

And you, Gladstone! You knew?

Uh... I... Um... I can't exactly...

Argh! You tried to hoist a stolen painting on me!

Uh, oh!

Save yourself!

Ha, ha, ha!

Just wait until I...

Ow! The glass!

Aaaah!

Ouch!

THUMP

THUMP

A few days later...

Unca Donald! Where did you get the money for a trip to Hawaii?

Hee, hee! A certain museum offered me a thousand dollars for the return of a certain painting!

And how did you convince unca Scrooge not to evict us?

Let's just say a very good friend of mine and a sleeping beauty helped us out!

And where is unca Scrooge?

He's taking a long rest from business, with his *good friends* Johnny and Gladstone...

Indeed...

Munch, much!

My nephew! As soon as I feel better...

Gulp! I hope my luck can save me!

END